PITTA

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BIRDS: A CLASS APART
Trip Report: Narsapur, September 11, 2022

Mallika Chandrasekhar

Oriental Magpie Robin with scorpion kill (Photo: Chethan Prathap Vadla)

This Sunday turned out to be a beautiful surprise with an invitation to go bird-watching with a group of bird enthusiasts from Deccan Birders, Hyderabad. We congregated in the early hours at the designated place before heading to Narsapur Reserve Forest, which is around 50km from the city of Hyderabad. The weather was anything but sunny. There was a light drizzle from the previous night which continued to this Sunday morning too. But that neither deterred nor dampened the collective spirits of the bird-watching group. I felt glad to be joining them on my maiden birdwatching trip.

I realized very soon that just loving birds is not enough. We have to visit and view birds in their natural habitat and be respectful of their world without disturbing or imposing upon their space.

Narsapur Reserve Forest is a perfect place to experience a vast expanse of flora and thus a variety of birds as well.

It took me a while to get used to the binoculars. I had to fine-tune both my visual focus and hand adjustment to appreciate the beauty of what a (borrowed) pair of binoculars could do. The result was a magnificent, breath-taking view of a faraway bird perched high above.

The first was a Yellow-footed Green Pigeon that was perched in a stately manner on one of the cable lines above. I Google-searched it after reaching home to find that it is the state bird of Maharashtra. It is a fairly common urban bird found in lowland forests and forest edges, as well as parks, gardens, and orchards. It is not a very vocal bird and occasionally just gives out some cooing whistles.

Chalky Percher (aka Ground Skimmer) female
(Photo: Asif Husain Arastu)

Indian Silverbill (Photo: Chethan Prathap Vadla)

Initially, we could only see around 25 bird species – with the sun refusing to show up, the birds seemed to have kept themselves out of sight. Our visit seemed not to have elicited much enthusiasm from the birds. Had the sun come out in all its glory, perhaps we would have had more birds to view and be in awe of. But since this was my first time, I was just happy to be in the midst of such fresh air, vast open spaces, and bird sounds. Fortunately, by the end of the outing, more birds turned up and we finished the day at over 60 species.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (Photo: Chethan Prathap Vadla)

Indian Grey Hornbill (Photo: Asif Husain Arastu)

Bird songs and bird sounds permeated the whole area. I remember a spellbinding moment just listening to the cadence and symphony of two distinct birds calling from high up in the trees. It was a celebration of all that is pure and pristine in nature. Such sounds cheer the heart and awaken the soul.

A view of Narsapur Lake (Photo: Mallika Chandrasekhar)

We also visited Freedom Park, another gorgeous landscape in Narsapur. There is a huge lake on one side and lush greenery on the other side. The scenery is simply spectacular.

The green environs near Freedom Park
(Photo: Mallika Chandrasekhar)

The light rain added an allure of romantic realism. Nature somehow evokes the best in birds, beasts, and beings. I know I am a better person after experiencing this bird-watching trip.

Laughing Dove (Photo: Chethan Prathap Vadla)

Green fields near Freedom Park
(Photo: Mallika Chandrasekhar)

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	*Treron phoenicopterus*	34	Indian Robin	*Copsychus fulicatus*
2	Grey-bellied Cuckoo	*Cacomantis passerinus*	35	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
3	Common Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx varius*	36	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis tickelliae*
4	Intermediate Egret	*Ardea intermedia*	37	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*
5	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	38	Purple-rumped Sunbird	*Leptocoma zeylonica*
6	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	39	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*
7	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	40	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*
8	Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*	41	Indian Silverbill	*Euodice malabarica*
9	Red-naped Ibis	*Pseudibis papillosa*	42	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
10	Indian Grey Hornbill	*Ocyceros birostris*	43	Red Avadavat	*Amandava amandava*
11	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	44	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*
12	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	45	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*
13	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*	46	Blue Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*
14	Coppersmith Barbet	*Psilopogon haemacephalus*	47	Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*
15	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	*Leiopicus mahrattensis*	48	Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*
16	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	49	Little Swift	*Apus affinis*
17	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*	50	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*
18	White-browed Fantail	*Rhipidura aureola*	51	Crested Treeswift	*Hemiprocne coronata*
19	Indian Paradise-flycatcher	*Terpsiphone paradisi*	52	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*
20	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*	53	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*
21	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	54	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*
22	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*	55	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*
23	Grey-breasted Prinia	*Prinia hodgsonii*	56	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*
24	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*	57	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*
25	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*	58	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
26	Zitting Cisticola	*Cisticola juncidis*	59	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*
27	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	60	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*
28	Red-rumped Swallow	*Cecropis daurica*	61	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
29	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*	62	Large Grey Babbler	*Argya malcolmi*
30	Yellow-eyed Babbler	*Chrysomma sinense*	63	Asian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*
31	Jungle Babbler	*Argya striata*	64	Brahminy Starling	*Sturnia pagodarum*
32	Yellow-billed Babbler	*Argya affinis*	65	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*
33	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*			

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BIRDING IN MISHMI HILLS & LOWER DIBANG VALLEY
Trip Report: Arunachal Pradesh, March 27-31, 2022

Text & Photos: Aditya Rao

Blyth's Tragopan, the star bird of Mishmi Hills

Introduction

It is well known that North-east India abutting the Himalayas forms a unique subtropical or tropical moist montane forest supporting large distribution of avifauna. We had the fortune of visiting Mishmi Hills for a unique birding adventure during the end of March 2022.

Mishmi was part of our 3-hop journey that included the Dehing-Patkai National Forest in Assam, Maguri Beel grasslands and finally Mishmi Hills. This article covers the birds found exclusively in Mishmi Hills and other areas we visited at Lower Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Red-billed Scimitar Babbler

Black-breasted Parrotbill

Red-throated Thrush

Geography (source: Wikipedia)

Geomorphically, the Mishmi Hills are divided into 2 sections – the flood plains of tributaries of Brahmaputra River and the Arunachal Himalayas consisting of snow-capped mountains, lower Himalayan ranges, and Shivalik ranges. The Hills reach heights above 5,000 m (16,000 ft) but have not been properly mapped. This hilly area is characterized by steeply sloping landform, sub-tropical evergreen forest and high rainfall. The central part of the Hills wraps around both sides of the Dibang Valley. The Mishmi Hills are part of Shan-Malaysia plate

Golden Babbler

Yellow-throated Marten

View of the cloud forests at Upper Mishmi Hills

The Mishmi Hills experience heavy rainfall with pre-monsoon showers from March. The humidity and rainfall are about 90%. There are about 6000 plant species, 100 mammal species and about 700 bird species. There are also many butterflies and other insects. Temperate conifers, sub-alpine woody shrubs, alpine meadows, bamboos and grasslands are found in this region. Tiger, common leopard, clouded leopard, snow leopard, golden cat, jungle cat, marbled cat and the leopard cat are found. The endangered red panda is seen in the northern reaches and the Hoolock Gibbon is in the lower areas.

Hoolock Gibbon pair

Beautiful Nuthatch

View of Mishmi Hills from Mayudia Pass

Travel

Travel to Mishmi Hills is a breeze these days, thanks to the fantastic infrastructure – special mention is needed for the Bhupen Hazarika Bridge, this bridge connects the Tinsukia district (Dibrugarh Airport) of Assam seamlessly to Arunachal Pradesh and is over the Lohit River, a major tributary of the mighty Brahmaputra. The bridge is close to 10km long and a fantastic tourist spot and engineering marvel. The roads are also excellent with great infrastructure, given the tactical need to maintain easy access to Arunachal Pradesh and its interiors.

A view of Tiwarigaon, village hamlet halfway to Mishmi Hills

White-hooded Babbler

We spent about one day at Lower Mishmi Hills (near Roing city) and about 2 days on top of the hills near Mayudia Pass (highest pass). Given the montane forests, rains are completely unpredictable, we had a few sessions which was a total washout, but nevertheless got some excellent opportunities to bird for important birds of Mishmi Hills.

Mayudia Pass, highest point on road to Hunli village

White-breasted Parrotbill

Mishmi's montane forests, with extremely unpredictable weather conditions

Hodgson's Frogmouth

Elephant Grass fields at Jia Grasslands, near Roing in the lower valley

Long-billed Wren Babbler

Environment Concern, hunting & impact

Given that Arunachal Pradesh is strategic due to its location at the border, there has been a rapid investment to build infrastructure to help movement of military and associated assets. Also, locals have an imbibed culture of serious bird hunting, and it is not very uncommon to see people with airguns and slings. This makes it extremely hard to bird, given that birds are inherently scared of humans, and this has had a clear effect on the bird life and distribution. Significant social impact is needed through awareness to ensure that the birds are protected, and hunting, if at all necessary, becomes sustainable.

It is also extremely disappointing to see the entire stretch of the hills highly polluted with plastic everywhere: either the tourists who visit the hills, or the workers engaged in various government projects, blatantly abuse the environment, and there is no mechanism to ensure upkeep of the hills. Also, there are several hydroelectric and dam projects being envisioned for Dibang valley that will surely have serious impact on the beautiful setup we have today.

Mishmi (aka Rusty-throated) Wren Babbler

Grey-chinned Minivet

Jerdon's Babbler

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	White-cheeked Partridge	*Arborophila atrogularis*	23	Scarlet Minivet	*Pericrocotus speciosus*
2	Blyth's Tragopan	*Tragopan blythii*	24	Himalayan Shrike-babbler	*Pteruthius ripleyi*
3	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	25	Black-eared Shrike-babbler	*Pteruthius melanotis*
4	Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	26	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	*Hemipus picatus*
5	Barred Cuckoo Dove	*Macropygia unchall*	27	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*
6	Plaintive Cuckoo	*Cacomantis merulinus*	28	White-throated Fantail	*Rhipidura albicollis*
7	Large Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx sparverioides*	29	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*
8	Hodgson's Frogmouth	*Batrachostomus hodgsoni*	30	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*
9	Yellow Bittern	*Ixobrychus sinensis*	31	Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*
10	Black-winged Kite	*Elanus caeruleus*	32	Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus remifer*
11	Oriental Honey-buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*	33	Grey-backed Shrike	*Lanius tephronotus*
12	Steppe Eagle	*Aquila nipalensis*	34	Eurasian Jay	*Garrulus glandarius*
13	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	35	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*
14	Himalayan Owl	*Strix nivicolum*	36	Grey Treepie	*Dendrocitta formosae*
15	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	37	Yellow-bellied Fantail	*Chelidorhynx hypoxanthus*
16	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	38	Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*
17	Blue-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon asiaticus*	39	Yellow-browed Tit	*Sylviparus modestus*
18	Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos macei*	40	Sultan Tit	*Melanochlora sultanea*
19	Darjeeling Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos darjellensis*	41	Green-backed Tit	*Parus monticolus*
20	Grey-headed Woodpecker	*Picus canus*	42	Yellow-cheeked Tit	*Machlolophus spilonotus*
21	Grey-chinned Minivet	*Pericrocotus solaris*	43	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*
22	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*	44	Grey-breasted Prinia	*Prinia hodgsonii*

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
45	Zitting Cisticola	*Cisticola juncidis*	94	Himalayan Cutia	*Cutia nipalensis*
46	Striated Grassbird	*Megalurus palustris*	95	Black-faced Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron affine*
47	Nepal House Martin	*Delichon nipalense*	96	Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*
48	Striated Bulbul	*Pycnonotus striatus*	97	Long-tailed Sibia	*Heterophasia picaoides*
49	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*	98	Beautiful Sibia	*Heterophasia pulchella*
50	Red-whiskered Bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*	99	Streak-throated Barwing	*Actinodura waldeni*
51	White-throated Bulbul	*Alophoixus flaveolus*	100	Blue-winged Minla	*Actinodura cyanouroptera*
52	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*	101	Chestnut-tailed Minla	*Actinodura strigula*
53	Ashy Bulbul	*Hemixos flavala*	102	Rusty-fronted Barwing	*Actinodura egertoni*
54	Mountain Bulbul	*Ixos mcclellandii*	103	Silver-eared Mesia	*Leiothrix argentauris*
55	Ashy-throated Warbler	*Phylloscopus maculipennis*	104	Striated Babbler	*Argya earlei*
56	Buff-barred Warbler	*Phylloscopus pulcher*	105	White-crested Laughingthrush	*Garrulax leucolophus*
57	Yellow-browed Warbler	*Phylloscopus inornatus*	106	Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush	*Ianthocincla rufogularis*
58	Grey-cheeked Warbler	*Phylloscopus poliogenys*	107	Rufous-necked Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus ruficollis*
59	Chestnut-crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus castaniceps*	108	Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus pectoralis*
60	Yellow-vented Warbler	*Phylloscopus cantator*	109	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	*Sitta cinnamoventris*
61	Blyth's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus reguloides*	110	White-tailed Nuthatch	*Sitta himalayensis*
62	Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler	*Cettia major*	111	Beautiful Nuthatch	*Sitta formosa*
63	Yellow-bellied Warbler	*Abroscopus superciliaris*	112	Eurasian Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*
64	Rufous-faced Warbler	*Abroscopus albogularis*	113	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
65	Black-faced Warbler	*Abroscopus schisticeps*	114	White-collared Blackbird	*Turdus albocinctus*
66	Mountain Tailorbird	*Phyllergates cucullatus*	115	Red-throated Thrush	*Turdus ruficollis*
67	Broad-billed Warbler	*Tickellia hodgsoni*	116	Verditer Flycatcher	*Eumyias thalassinus*
68	Golden-breasted Fulvetta	*Lioparus chrysotis*	117	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
69	Jerdon's Babbler	*Chrysomma altirostre*	118	Himalayan Bluetail	*Tarsiger rufilatus*
70	Brown-throated Fulvetta	*Fulvetta ludlowi*	119	Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	*Ficedula strophiata*
71	Streak-throated Fulvetta	*Fulvetta manipurensis*	120	White-capped Redstart	*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*
72	Black-breasted Parrotbill	*Paradoxornis flavirostris*	121	Hodgson's Redstart	*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
73	White-breasted Parrotbill	*Psittiparus ruficeps*	122	Black Redstart	*Phoenicurus ochruros*
74	Striated Yuhina	*Staphida castaniceps*	123	Daurian Redstart	*Phoenicurus auroreus*
75	White-naped Yuhina	*Yuhina bakeri*	124	Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	*Monticola rufiventris*
76	Stripe-throated Yuhina	*Yuhina gularis*	125	Blue Rock Thrush	*Monticola solitarius*
77	Indian White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*	126	Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola maurus*
78	Chestnut-capped Babbler	*Timalia pileata*	127	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum ignipectus*
79	Golden Babbler	*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*	128	Black-throated Sunbird	*Aethopyga saturata*
80	Rufous-capped Babbler	*Cyanoderma ruficeps*	129	Green-tailed Sunbird	*Aethopyga nipalensis*
81	Mishmi Wren Babbler	*Spelaeornis badeigularis*	130	Crimson Sunbird	*Aethopyga siparaja*
82	Bar-winged Wren Babbler	*Spelaeornis troglodytoides*	131	Streaked Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera magna*
83	Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler	*Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*	132	Orange-bellied Leafbird	*Chloropsis hardwickii*
84	Red-billed Scimitar Babbler	*Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps*	133	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
85	Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler	*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*	134	Rufous-breasted Accentor	*Prunella strophiata*
86	Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler	*Erythrogenys mcclellandi*	135	Maroon-backed Accentor	*Prunella immaculata*
87	Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler	*Stachyris roberti*	136	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
88	White-hooded Babbler	*Gampsorhynchus rufulus*	137	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*
89	Yellow-throated Fulvetta	*Schoeniparus cinereus*	138	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*
90	Rufous-winged Fulvetta	*Schoeniparus castaneceps*	139	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*
91	Long-billed Wren Babbler	*Napothera malacoptila*	140	Olive-backed Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*
92	Nepal Fulvetta	*Alcippe nipalensis*	141	Dark-rumped Rosefinch	*Carpodacus edwardsii*
93	Striated Laughingthrush	*Grammatoptila striata*	142	Little Bunting	*Emberiza pusilla*

Some other photos taken during the trip:

Silver-eared Mesia

Mountain Tailorbird

Steppe Eagle

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker

Little Bunting

Black-throated Sunbird

Striated Bulbul

Long-tailed Sibia

Orange-bellied Leafbird

Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler

Streaked Spiderhunter

Yellow-throated Fulvetta

Rufous-winged Fulvetta

Black-eared Shrike-babbler

Bar-winged Wren Babbler

Chestnut-crowned Warbler

Daurian Redstart

Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler

Golden-breasted Fulvetta

Brown-throated Fulvetta

Dark-breasted Rosefinch

Chestnut-tailed Minla

Striated Yuhina

Himalayan Shrike-babbler

Himalayan Owl

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel

Stripe-throated Yuhina

Darjeeling Woodpecker

Streak-throated Barwing

White-tailed Nuthatch

Black-faced Warbler

Green-backed Tit

Ashy-throated Warbler

Green-tailed Sunbird (male)

Yellow-browed Tit

Yellow-vented Warbler

Yellow-bellied Prinia

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher

Mountain Bulbul

Manipur (aka Streak-throated) Fulvetta

Rufous-breasted Accentor

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush

Black-faced Laughingthrush

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush

Himalayan Cutia

Yellow-cheeked Tit

Eurasian Wren

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike

Dark-rumped Rosefinch (female)

Broad-billed Warbler

Yellow-bellied Warbler

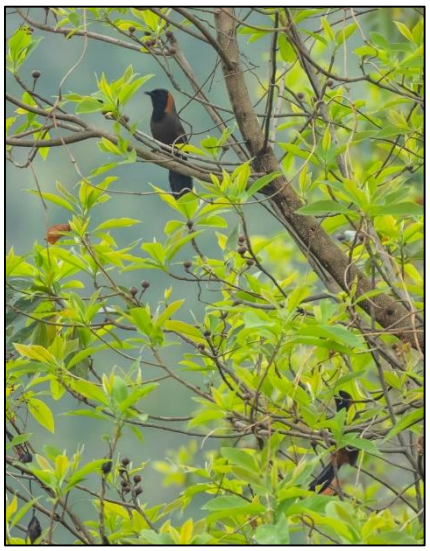
Himalayan Bluetail

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie

Striated Laughingthrush

Plaintive Cuckoo

Blue Whistling Thrush



Rufous-necked Laughingthrush

Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler

Crimson Sunbird

Rufous-faced Warbler

Beautiful Sibia

Mithun (aka Gayal)

Grey-headed Woodpecker female (L) and male (R)

Grey-chinned Minivet

Eurasian Jay

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher

Grey-cheeked Warbler

White-naped Yuhina

Buff-barred Warbler

Blue-winged Siva

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush

White Wagtail

Maroon-backed Accentor

Verditer Flycatcher

Eurasian Hoopoe

Black & Red-vented Bulbul

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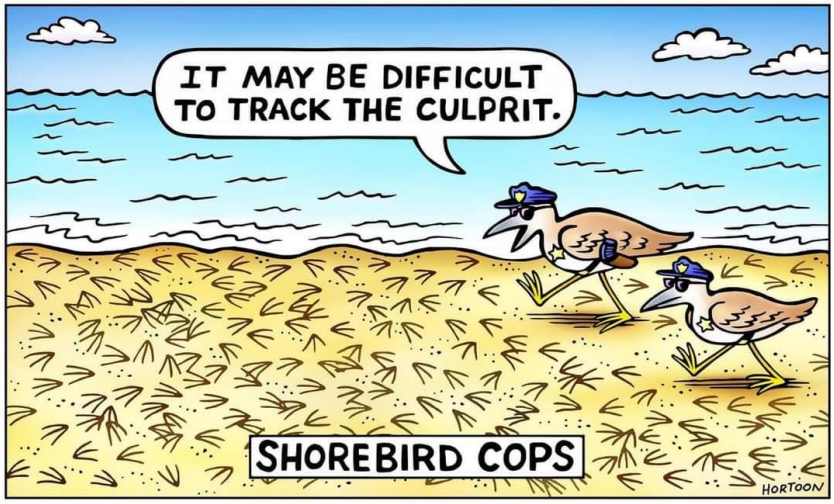
Bird Humour

Umesh Mani



(Received on WhatsApp, May 04, 2022)

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photo: Umesh Mani

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Dunlin breeding (L) and non-breeding (R) (Jamnagar, Gujarat, November 23, 2021)

Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae
Genus: *Calidris*
Species: *C. alpina*
Size: 16-22 cm

Description & distribution: The Dunlin is a small wader that derives its name from 'dun' (meaning dull brown) with a suffix '-ling' (a person or thing with the mentioned quality). First described by Carl Linnaeus in 1758 as *Tringa alpina*, it was later moved to genus *Erolia* before finally being added to the genus *Calidris* along with 23 other species which include sandpipers, knots, sanderlings and stints. Ten subspecies are recognized, varying mainly in the amount of rufous coloration shown during breeding. In breeding plumage, the adult Dunlin is unmistakable, showing a black belly that no other wader of its size has – this has also given it the alternate name of Black-bellied Sandpiper. In non-breeding plumage, the Dunlin has white underparts and delicately marked grey upperparts, indistinct supercilium, black markings on the flanks, and a clear white wingbar in flight. Juveniles are brownish above, with streaking on the belly, rufous fringes to mantle and scapulars, and a buff or whitish V on the back. The legs are black, and the black bill is slightly downcurved – a feature the Dunlin shares with the Curlew Sandpiper. Females have slightly longer bills than the males. The tip of the blunt bill has a mass of nerve endings that enable the Dunlin to use it as a sensitive probe to locate its invertebrate prey in wet mud and sand.

The Dunlin is a circumpolar breeder in the Arctic or sub-Arctic regions of Asia, Europe and North America. The breeding population from northern Europe and Asia are long-distance migrants, traveling all the way south to the temperate, subtropical and tropical regions of Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Birds from Alaska and Canada migrate shorter distances, to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America, although birds nesting in northern Alaska generally travel to Asia in winter. Some Dunlins are also observed to winter along the Iberian south coast.

Habitat & behaviour: As with most small waders, the Dunlin frequents coastal mudflats, sandy beaches, intertidal pools, sand bars, tidal creeks, river banks and flooded fields. While foraging, it makes short, fast runs over wet mud or wades in shallow water at the edges, where it makes characteristic 'sewing machine' actions as it seeks to locate the aquatic invertebrates like molluscs, worms and crustaceans that make up the most part of its diet. It is also known to take insects and seeds. It is gregarious and usually seen in mixed flocks along with other waders. Its flight is fast, and it tends to fly in formation with other individuals. The call is a typical sandpiper-like sharp *tue-ep* or *wee-wee-et*, and the display song is a harsh trill.

Nesting: The Dunlin nests extralimitally in the circumpolar regions of Asia, Europe and North America. The nest is a shallow scrape in the ground, lined with vegetation. The usual clutch consists of 4 eggs, buff with marked brown splotches. Incubation is done by both parents, with the male handling a larger proportion of brood care, as the female is known to abandon the brood and even leave the breeding area. Although the chicks are precocial, brood care is provided in the early stages of development. Some apparent hybrids with White-rumped Sandpiper and Purple Sandpiper have been reported from the Atlantic coasts of North America and Europe respectively.

Local name: The Dunlin is known as *'Kalopet kichadiyo'* in Gujarati, an apparent reference to the black belly seen during breeding. It is also known as *'Ruzani panlowwa'* in Hindi and *'Jalaranka'* or *'Karada tilawa'* in Marathi.

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